What is claimed is:

1. A similarity judgment method for judging a similarity value between images related to or attached with characteristic information representing a characteristic of each of objects therein, the similarity judgment method comprising the steps of:

calculating a similarity value between the objects included in the images, based on the characteristic information;

calculating the similarity value between the images, based on the similarity value between the objects.

2. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 1, wherein the characteristic information is included in metadata of image data representing the images.

3. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 1, wherein the characteristic information refers to at least one of items comprising a candidate of the name of each of the objects, a reliability value representing likelihood of each of the objects having the name, position information representing a position of each of the objects in a corresponding one of the images, size information representing a size of each of the objects, and a statistic value regarding characteristic quantities of each of the objects.

4. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 3, wherein, in the case where the characteristic information includes the candidate of the name of each of the objects, the

candidate of the name is determined based on an output from a self-organizing map, the output being obtained by inputting a characteristic quantity vector obtained from the characteristic quantities of each of the objects to the self-organizing map that has been trained regarding the names of the objects.

5. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of storing the images by classifying the images according to the similarity value between the images.

6. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 5, further comprising the step of sequentially outputting the stored images according to the similarity value between the images.

7. The similarity judgment method according to Claim 6, further comprising the steps of:

storing the images by further classifying the images according to the similarity value between the objects included in the images; and

sequentially outputting the stored images according to the similarity value between the objects in the images.

8. A similarity judgment apparatus for judging a similarity value between images related to or attached with characteristic information representing a characteristic of each of objects therein, the similarity judgment apparatus comprising:

object evaluation means for calculating a similarity value between the objects included in the images, based on the characteristic information; and

image evaluation means for calculating the similarity value between the images, based on the similarity value between the objects.

9. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the characteristic information is included in metadata of image data representing the images.

10. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein the characteristic information refers to at least one of items comprising a candidate of the name of each of the objects, a reliability value representing likelihood of each of the objects having the name, position information representing a position of each of the objects in a corresponding one of the images, size information representing a size of each of the objects, and a statistic value regarding characteristic quantities of each of the objects.

11. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein, in the case where the characteristic information includes the candidate of the name of each of the objects, the candidate of the name is determined based on an output from a self-organizing map, the output being obtained by inputting a characteristic quantity vector obtained from the characteristic quantities of each of the objects to the self-organizing map that has been trained regarding the names

of the objects.

12. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising storage means for storing the images by classifying the images according to the similarity value between the images.

13. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 12, further comprising output means for sequentially outputting the stored images according to the similarity value between the images.

14. The similarity judgment apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the storage means stores the images by further classifying the images according to the similarity value between the objects in the images, and the output means sequentially outputs the stored images, based on the similarity value between the objects.

15. A program for causing a computer to execute a similarity judgment method for judging a similarity value between images related to or attached with characteristic information representing a characteristic of each of objects therein, the program comprising the steps of:

calculating a similarity value between the objects included in the images, based on the characteristic information;

calculating the similarity value between the images, based on the similarity value between the objects.

16. The program according to Claim 15, wherein the

characteristic information is included in metadata of image data representing the images.

17. The program according to Claim 15, wherein the characteristic information refers to at least one of items comprising a candidate of the name of each of the objects, a reliability value representing likelihood of each of the objects having the name, position information representing a position of each of the objects in a corresponding one of the images, size information representing a size of each of the objects, and a statistic value regarding characteristic quantities of each of the objects.

18. The program according to Claim 17, wherein, in the case where the characteristic information includes the candidate of the name of each of the objects, the candidate of the name is determined based on an output from a self-organizing map, the output being obtained by inputting a characteristic quantity vector obtained from the characteristic quantities of each of the objects to the self-organizing map that has been trained regarding the names of the objects.

19. The program according to Claim 15, further comprising the step of storing the images by classifying the images according to the similarity value between the images.

20. The program according to Claim 19, further comprising the step of sequentially outputting the stored images according to the similarity value between the images.

21. The program according to Claim 20, further comprising the steps of:

storing the images by further classifying the images according to the similarity value between the objects included in the images; and

sequentially outputting the stored images according to the similarity value between the objects in the images.